

## **Raising a Memorial - 1 Samuel 7**

1 Samuel 7:8-13 Then the sons of Israel said to Samuel, “Do not cease to cry to the LORD our God for us, that He may save us from the hand of the Philistines.” 9 Samuel took a suckling lamb and offered it for a whole burnt offering to the LORD; and Samuel cried to the LORD for Israel and the LORD answered him. 10 Now Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, and the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel. But the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day against the Philistines and confused them, so that they were routed before Israel. 11 The men of Israel went out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistines, and struck them down as far as below Beth-car. 12 Then Samuel took a stone and set it between Mizpah and Shen, and named it Ebenezer, saying, “Thus far the LORD has helped us.” 13 So the Philistines were subdued and they did not come anymore within the border of Israel. And the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.

### **1. Our disobedience is consequential.**

1 Samuel 2:12 Now the sons of Eli were worthless men; they did not know the LORD.

1 Samuel 5:6 Now the hand of the LORD was heavy on the Ashdodites, and He ravaged them and smote them with tumors, both Ashdod and its territories.

1 Samuel 6:19 He struck down some of the men of Beth-shemesh because they had looked into the ark of the LORD. He struck down of all the people, 50,070 men, and the people mourned because the LORD had struck the people with a great slaughter.

Genesis 4:7 “Sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it.”

Numbers 32:23 “...Be sure your sin will find you out.”

Ezekiel 18:20 The person who sins will die.

1 Corinthians 1:18 For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

### **2. God’s blessings are conditional.**

1 Samuel 7:3 Then Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel, saying, “If you return to the LORD with all your heart, remove the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you and direct your hearts to the LORD and serve Him alone; and He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines.”

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

- Consider God’s conditions:

- **“return to the Lord”**
- **“remove the foreign gods”**
  - Matthew 3:8 Therefore bear fruit in keeping with repentance.
  - It wasn't enough to be sorry for sin. They had to remove the obstacles to full obedience from their lives.
- **Direct your hearts to the Lord**
  - If you return to the LORD with all your heart, remove the foreign gods and the Ashtaroht from among you and direct your hearts to the LORD
  - “Direct” carries the idea of establishing or point, and it includes the concept of being firm.
  - God doesn't want wishy-washy obedience. He wants our hearts to be firmly in His corner.
  - Matthew 15:8 “This people honors me with their lips but their heart is far away from me.”
- **Serve Him alone”**
  - Serving God is an active response to God's love and grace, and it's a proper action of repentance.
  - Romans 12:1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship.
  - Exodus 20:3 “You shall have no other gods before me.”
  - Matthew 19:21 “Go *and* sell your possessions and give to *the* poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”

### 3. **Our response is communicational.**

1 Samuel 7:10-11 Now Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, and the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel. But the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day against the Philistines and confused them, so that they were routed before Israel. 11 The men of Israel went out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistines, and struck them down as far as below Beth-car.

- How did Israel respond? Specifically, how did Samuel respond?
- 1 Samuel 7:12 Then Samuel took a stone and set it between Mizpah and Shen, and named it Ebenezer, saying, “Thus far the LORD has helped us.”

- He called the stone “Ebenezer,” which means stone of help.
- I can think of only one reason. The purpose of a memorial is to communicate.

- **A communication to ourselves as a reminder of God’s faithfulness.**

- **A communication to generations to come of God’s faithfulness.**

Joshua 4:6-7 Let this be a sign among you, so that when your children ask later, saying, ‘What do these stones mean to you?’ 7 then you shall say to them, ‘Because the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off.’ So these stones shall become a memorial to the sons of Israel forever.”

1 – How will you remind yourself of God’s faithfulness in the future?

2 – How will you communicate God’s faithfulness to future generations?